

Tourist's Perception Towards Ecotourism (With Reference to Marina Beach at Tamil Nadu)

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Abstract

Ecotourism environment's destination is consists of factors and forces that affect the ecotourism's ability to develop and maintain successful sustainability and relationships with its target tourist. Wherever we go green thinking's are coming to our mind. The source of green thinking is under threat for peaceful living of people due to man-made activities. There are so many recreation facilities available which are created by nature and charged by the service provider. The Marina Beach is one such a creation, enclosed with impressive golden sand and a clear strip of blue sea is among the most wonderful beaches in India. The objective of this paper is to identify level of awareness and experience of tourists about ecotourism destination and to find out tourist eco-friendly attitude about Marina Beach ecotourism destination. This study data collected only through literate young respondents at Marina Beach destination. This study Sample size has taken only Marina beach tourist at Tamil Nadu. This study finding clearly and closely observed that there are fundamental issues related to hospitality services, facilities, amenities, safety and personalized care with regard to visitor awareness and experience. Marina Beach ecotourism has provided some negative experiences to the visitors such as cleanness, wastage, tourist's information help centre, safety and security. Finally the study reveals that tourist perception of ecotourism destination is well aware of destination and gave enhanced experience.

1. Introduction

Throughout the world, tourism has been recognized for its vast contribution to the economy in many countries. Tourism serves to encourage the development of the basic infrastructure, contributes to the growth of domestic industries and attracts foreign investment. The consistent growth of tourists and tourism receipts over the decade since international travel became accessible to the general public, has convinced many developing nations that they can profit from tourism¹

¹Ismail, F., & Turner, L. (2008). Host and tourist perceptions on small island tourism: a case study of Perhentian and Redang Islands, Malaysia. International Conference on Applied Economics

(Ismail & Turner, 2008). That is why tourism considered as one of the fastest growing industries. In recent times tourism industry development is a high priority agenda for most of the nations and communities everywhere in globe. The contribution of tourism industry in the global as well as individual perspective is really amazing. Many countries in the world depend upon tourism as a main source of foreign exchange earnings and very decisive role to transform the world into a globalized economy where all nations can exchange free trade and share their interest of mutual benefits based on tourism industry. Wherever we go green thinking are coming to our mind. The source of green thinking is under threat for peaceful living of people due to man made things. There are so many recreation facilities available which are created by human beings and charged by the service provider. Recreation provided by the nature is available at free of cost which cannot be estimated but human yet to develop machines to calculate the value of recreation or pleasure given by the nature created places. This ecotourism has embarrassed the concepts of preservation and conservation of nature by responsible travel.

Ecotourism supports the objectives of sustainable development. Ecotourism refers to sustainable development environment, local community and visitor of within the tourism destination. Ecotourism is an effective vehicle for empowering local communities around the world to fight against poverty or alleviating poverty and to achieve sustainable development as well as the UNWTO (United National World Tourism Organization) has given the node to adopt the resolution which recognized ecotourism as a key to fight against poverty, the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development under the title 'Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection' and it's also support to visitor for emphasis on enriching personal experiences and environmental awareness through interpretation, ecotourism promotes greater understanding and appreciation for nature, local society, and culture.

Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation has defined that ecotourism consisting areas which are available in plenty for evince interest in natural areas such as Hill Station, Waterfalls, Forests, Bird Sanctuaries and beaches. According to Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) Marina Beach is an ecotourism place which is not only a familiar ecotourism in Tamil Nadu tourism destination but also the second largest beach in the world. The Marina Beach, enclosed with impressive golden sand and a clear strip of blue sea, is among the most wonderful beaches in India, which helps to sustainable development of recreation because ecotourism provides an effective economic incentives for conserving and enhancing bio-cultural diversity to environment and helps to protect the natural and cultural heritage of our beautiful planet, its supports to local society which is increasing local capacity building and employment opportunities. Finally all over the world, the tourists are visiting it due to its climatic, scenic beauty and ecological resources².

2. Conceptual Framework

- **Definition of Ecotourism**

The International Ecotourism Society previously defines Ecotourism as "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." Now defines as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015).

² <http://www.tamilnadutourism.org/eco-tour.html>

- **Principles of Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement, participate in and market ecotourism activities should adopt the following ecotourism principles:

- ❖ Minimize physical, social, behavioral, and psychological impacts.
- ❖ Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- ❖ Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- ❖ Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- ❖ Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.

Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities. Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the Indigenous People in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment. (TIES, 2015)³

3. Review of Literature

Spanou. S, Tsegenidi. K, et al., (2011)⁴ analyzed visitor management is considered an important for the sustainable development of protected areas as the presence of visitors may cause negative impacts on wildlife and vegetation. Within this framework, visitor impacts and perceptions are considered critical for decision-making and planning of future management regimes. Results call for more information and education of the visitors about the Valley's conservation and ecological value, better facilities and services provided, site hardening and a better policy of prices. **Mohd Rusli Yacob, Alias Radan et al., (2011)⁵** have analyzed on four sections viz., analyses of tourists profiles and their characteristic of visit; tourists perceptions and opinions on ecotourism resource management; ecotourism resource maintenance; and tourists opinion on implementing of revenue collection. The results provide useful implications on ecotourism resources management in Marine Park. It is possibly assists park management for their future improvement in managing ecotourism resources. **A.C, Ravichandran, et al., (2012)⁶** made an attempt on the surroundings of Lata Jarum and Lata Jarum itself. This area is rich in biodiversity with endemic flora and fauna. The most significant finding is that the majority have a neutral perception due to a lack of understanding and knowledge about community-based ecotourism. And other finding is that both positive perception and negative perception towards community-based ecotourism. **Md. Anowar Hossain Bhuiyan, Chamhuri Siwar et al., (2012)⁷** have done a research work on the environmental matters regarding sustainable ecotourism development. This study found that, Ecotourism development in Sekayu has

⁴ **Spanou.S, Tsegenidi.K and Georegiadis.Th (2011)** "Perception of Visitors Environmental Impacts of Ecotourism: A Case Study in the Valley of Butterflies Protected Area, Rhodes Island, Greece" *International Journal Environmental Resources*, 6(1) Pp.245-258. ISSN: 1735-6865

⁵ **Mohd Rusli Yacob, Alias Radam and zaiton Samdin (2011)** "Tourist Perception and Opinion towards Ecotourism Development and Management in Redang Island Marine Parks, Malaysia" *International Business Research*, Vol.4.

⁶ **Er.A.C, Ravichandran Moorthy, Lydon.N, Selvadurai.S, Sheau Tsuey Chong and Adam.J.H (2012)** "Perception of Local Community towards Community- Based Ecotourism" *Advance in Natural and applied Science*, Vol.6(2), Pp.213-218, ISSN: 1995-0772

⁷ **Md. Anowar Hossain Bhuiyan, Chamhuri Siwar, Shaharuddin Mohamad Ismail and Rabiul Islam (2012)** "Environmental Ecotourism for Sustainable Development in Sekayu Recreational Forest, Malaysia:

Perception from the Local Communities" *Advances in Environmental Biology*, Vol: 6(9): Pp: 2553-2557, ISSN 1995-0756.

maintained the environmental sustainability and ensured social, economic and environmental benefits for the local people and find out Ecotourism development in Sekayu must be considering some initiatives- conserving natural resources, providing sustainable harvest, improving local people living quality and livelihood security, maintaining environmental quality and keeping the local environment free from pollution.

4. Factor Influencing Ecotourism:

There are certain factors which really influence the tourist to repeat his visit and a positive mouth to mouth canvas takes place. Basically tourists' perception depends upon their fundamental habit such as Cultural, Society, Attitude, Behavior and Lifestyle. The perception is attaining awareness, motivation, and eco-friendly attitudes. Ecotourism factors are identified through review of literature. Many researchers have used in their studies different factors; this study will take same factors. Keeping the above factors in mind this study framed some factors which reflected their perception.

Accordingly, **Awareness** factors identify tourist's knowledge about environmental conservation, local people culture, service quality in destination, and conservation behavior. **Experiences** factors influence by overall feeling and emotion towards ecotourism viz., Cost of price, Natural based ecotourism, Quality of Services and observation of around ecotourism destination, transportation, boarding, and local people behaviour etc., **Eco-friendly attitude** is about new thought and thinking about environmental activities and after visited the tourist destination.

5. Statement Of The Problem

Ecotourism is a great blessing for the nation as well as plays a vital role in the economic development of the country. Tourists have been inadequate awareness and knowledge about ecotourism there by making negative impact in ecotourism destination which not only spoil the place but also affect the income generating capacity of the select destination. Tourist spots should be sustainable maintenance such as time to time up gradation and preservation as well as period to period planning of management, implementation and maintenance. Basically lack of infrastructure facility available in ecotourism place such as boating, medical facilities, accommodation facilities and inadequate recreational facilities also create visitor's dissatisfaction and this result provide some negative experience about ecotourism destination. So they want much more adequate knowledge, awareness and caring of ecotourism as well as create sustainable development of ecotourism destination. So that this study focused on awareness of tourists, Eco- friendly attitudes and their experience about Marina Beach destination in Tamil Nadu.

6. Objective Of The Study

The Study has framed the following objectives

- To know tourists awareness about Marina Beach destination.
- To examine tourist experience about Marina Beach destination.
- To find out the eco-friendly attitude of the tourists.

7. Methodology

- **Data Collection:**

This study data collected only through youngster with literate respondents at Marina Beach destination. This study concentrated only Ecotourism destination of Marina beach in Chennai. This study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through well-Structured Interview schedule. Secondary data was collected from Books, Journals, Magazines, Newspaper and Websites. Website data collected from Government of India, Ministry of Tourism, The International Ecotourism Society, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation etc.,

➤ **Sampling Techniques:**

This study has taken 50 respondents visited the marina beach and from adopted judgment sample techniques collecting data for the respondents. A well-structured interview schedule was administered for data collection. Collected data was analyzed with SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Science) descriptive statistics tools like simple percentages, figures and tables are used to establish relationship among variables. Independent sample t test, Paired t test, Chi Square test, coefficient of Correlation, Linear Regression and require study related test applied for analyzing and interpreting the information. The results were finally presented in charts and tables.

8. Finding And Analysis

8.1 Demography Factors And Attribute Variables

Tourist's Demography factors: Gender- Male (18) 36% and Female (32) 64%. Residential Place- Rural (3) 6%, Urban (16)32%, Semi-Urban (8)16%, Metro (23) 46%. Marital status- Married (12)24% and Unmarried (38) 76%. Education level- HSC (10) 20%, Degree (30) 60% and Professional course (10)20%.

Tourist's Attribute variables: purpose of the visit- Education/ Training (1) 2%, Celebrate with friends/Relatives (3)6%, Relaxation (14)28% and Holiday/ Recreation (32) 64%. Type of Accommodation- Non star hotel (8)16%, Other Place (42) 84%. Visited times – First time (29)58%, Second time (3)6%, Third time (13)26% and more third (5)10%. Reason for selecting the place- Natural Based (33)66%, very convenient (9)18% and Suitable Climate (8) 16%.

8.2 Independent Sample t test

The independent-samples t-test (or independent t-test, for short) compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous, dependent variable.

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between Males and females with mean scores awareness about ecotourism destination

Table 1: Mean scores awareness about ecotourism destination

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P
Male	124.61	17.016	0.12	0.309
Female	129.28	144.456		

*5% level of Significant

Interpretation

Since the P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 per cent of level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between Males and females with mean scores awareness about ecotourism destination. Based on the mean scores the Female tourists (129.28) have better awareness than Male tourists (124.61).

8.3 ANOVA

ANOVA is an analysis of variance in which there is only one independent variable. It can be used to compare mean differences in 2 or more groups.

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between among education levels with respect to eco-friendly attitude of tourist

Table 2: Education levels with respect to eco-friendly attitude of tourist

Education Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P
HSC	45.47	9.19	3.718	0.04
Degree	50.30	13.39		
Professional Course	47.20	13.90		

*5% level of Significant

Interpretation

Since the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 per cent level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is statistically significant difference between among education levels with respect to eco-friendly attitude of tourists. Based on the turkey multiple comparisons table reveals that mean wise analysis of education levels HSC (45.47), Degree (50.30) and Professional Course (47.20). It implies that the degree qualified tourists (mean score 50.30) are very well concentration with the environmental eco- friendly attitudes.

8.4 Chi-Square

The chi-square test for independence, also called Pearson's chi-square test or the chi-square test of association, is used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables.

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There is no association between marital status and level of experience about ecotourism

Table 3: The chi-square test for independence showing marital status and level of experience about ecotourism

Marital Status	Level of Experience			Pearson Chi-square	P
	Low	Moderately	High		
Married	4(8%)	4(8%)	4(8%)	4.574 ^a	0.10
Unmarried	4 (8%)	24(48%)	10(20%)		
Total	8	28	14		

*5% level of Significant

Interpretation

Since the P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 per cent of level of significance. Hence it is conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between marital status and level of experience about ecotourism. Based on the Chi square table reveals that majority of the tourists are belonging to moderately experienced on ecotourism destination with the group of unmarried tourist (48%).

8.5 Coefficient of Correlation

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There is no relationship difference between Awareness and Experience of tourist about ecotourism destination

Table	Value	
	Awareness	Experience
	Pearson correlation	.419**
	P	.002

ecotourism destination
4: Coefficient of Correlation about

Awareness and Experience of tourist about ecotourism destination

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Interpretation

Coefficient of correlation between awareness and experience is 0.419** which indicate that positive relationship between awareness and experience at 1 percentage level of significance.

9. Findings & Suggestions

9.1 Demographic Profile

- A maximum of 64 per cent of tourist are females and minimum of 36 per cent of tourist is represented by male.
- It is found that maximum of 46 per cent of tourist are residing in metro city areas and minimum of 6 per cent of the tourist residing in rural area.
- Among the total tourists, 76 per cent of the tourists are unmarried, while 24 per cent of tourists are married.
- Education is one of factors which stimulate the tourist of eco- friendly attitudes. A maximum of 60 per cent of the tourist are Degree holder and minimum of 20 per cent tourist are completed HSC and Professional course.
- It showed that majority of 64 per cent of tourist are coming for the purpose of relaxation whereas minimum of 2 per cent of tourist are educational training.
- As far as accommodation concerned, a maximum of 84 per cent of the tourists have chosen the accommodation friends/ relatives home and maximum tourist lived in the nearest marina beach. While minimum of 16 per cent of tourist have chosen non star accommodation.
- Majority of 58 percent of tourists are visited marina beach three times and minimum of 6 per cent tourists are the first time.
- It is found that maximum of 66 per cent of tourist are selected marina for the reason of natural based tourism and minimum of 16 per cent of tourist are chosen for climate.

9.2 Factors and Variable SPSS Test

- Independent sample t test found that female tourist has better awareness of ecotourism destination. Because of majority female are coming from Metro city of resident place and Majority of the female has completed degree level of education. Females have highly aware about environment natural effects, tourist destination facility and economic ability activities.

- ANOVA test reveals that accepted the null hypothesis of education level and eco-friendly attitude. Because of majority of the tourist have completed degree level education so that their highly concentration of eco friendly activities attitudes like that reduce over consumption and waste, Promote to economic incentive for conservation and help to nature for bio diversity culture.
- Chi square test found that unmarried tourist has moderately associated with their experiences about Marian Beach destination. Because of unmarried tourist more involved natural based experiences and quality of services like that relax spiritually, cost of price, convenient location and bus facilities, relaxation and fairly price service.
- Coefficient of correlation results exhibited awareness has strong linear positive relationship with experience of tourist about ecotourism destination.

9.3 Suggestions

The major findings of study are the eye-openers for all those involved directly and indirectly in the ecotourism projects at the Marina Beach. All those findings are very indisputable as far as the preservation of rich biodiversity and implementation of sustainable ecotourism is concerned. It was clearly and closely observed that there are fundamental issues related to protect beautiful resource effects, tourist guide, cleanness and personalized care with regard to visitor awareness and experience. Other issues like local people communication, visitor convenient time, local people relationship, crowding, and neat facilities also give negative experience of tourist. So Marina Beach authorities must develop these kinds of facilities.

10. Conclusion

Analysis and survey results revealed that majority of the tourists are awareness in ecotourism trades, knowing of its basic principles. Tourists should need not only awareness towards ecotourism but also understand attitudes of tourism destination activities. However, to ensure that attitudes are translated into behaviour there is also a need for emphasis on personal behavioural change. Although tourists were after visited ecotourism destination, they have been very well concentration an eco-friendly attitude activities. Tourists experience adaptation efforts in relation to each class of Sex, Regional class and level of education may have effect of attractiveness to ecotourism. So that ecotourism destination provides some negative experience to tourists. Finally the study reveals that perception of tourists awareness about the choose place is increased and it has given them an enhanced tourism destination experience.

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